

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

March 23, 2016

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**Meeting Date:** March 23, 2016

**Called to Order:** 6:00 PM

**Location:** 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls MA

**Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Michael Naughton, Fred Bowman Chris Menegoni (arrived at 6:03PM) and Patricia Pruitt. Greg Garrison was absent.

**Selectmen Present:** Michael Nelson and Chris Boutwell (arrived at 6:48 PM). Rich Kuklewicz was absent.

**Others Present:** Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, Town Planner Walter Ramsey, DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron, DPW Building Committee members Jay DiPucchio and Mark Williams, WPCF Administrative Assistant Kate Jones, WPCF Superintendent Bob Trombley,

**Mr. Hanold** thanked Mr. Naughton for chairing the meetings while he was unable to.

**Minutes**

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of March 16, 2016.

Vote: 4 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**DPW Building Committee**

Mr. Ramsey made the following presentation:

- To recap where we are: I was last before these boards on January 13<sup>th</sup> when the Selectmen awarded a feasibility study to Weston and Sampson Engineers to be conducted under the oversight of a 6 resident Public Works Facility Planning Committee. Members of the committee are here today. At this point the study is complete and I am going to recap the result and launch into a discussion of next steps.
- Current facility has been used by the Town since 1948- almost 70 years ago when the population was smaller by 1,000 people and there was significantly less road, sewer and parks to maintain.
- The current facility at 500 Avenue A is 11,000 square feet on a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre lot. Because it is undersized for 2016's needs, the DPW spills over onto other properties in town, the Montague machine parking lot is an outdoor storage yard, the former police station at Town Hall has become the grounds and maintenance bay. The salt shed, transfer station, and fuel station are located on Sandy Lane.
- The first step was a space needs assessment. This included an inventory of existing equipment, and interviews with staff. There is currently 17 staff. The study accommodates up to 25 future staff. There are 62 pieces of equipment which include 15 large trucks, 17 pickups, and 23 other pieces of equipments like trailers, etc.
- The consultant initially recommended a development program of 32,500 square feet. Over several iterations, the Committee has settled on recommending a 28,000 square foot program.
- The program includes reducing the square footage of the new building by retrofitting the existing 500 Avenue A into cold storage and archives. The Committee took a hard look and is confident in this recommended square footage. Further reduction would greatly impact the

basic functions and operations of the Public Works Facility Department- and require employees to be spread across multiple sites in town.

- Regarding site, the Committee recommends locating the facility on municipal land off Sandy Lane, directly behind Judd Wire. This is to the left of the Dog shelter as you approach it from Sandy Lane.
- The average cost per square foot for DPWs in MA in 2016 dollars is \$303/per square foot.
- The Montague facility is being carried at \$331/ square foot because of many unknowns about the conditions of the Sandy Lane site.
- That puts the proposed Montague Facility at a construction cost of \$9.2 million. With design and soft costs included, that figure is \$11.5 million.
- I note with emphasis that the contingency being carried is \$1.8 million.
- Regarding next steps, it is the DPW Planning Committee's goal to reduce the contingency and thereby drive down the cost of the project by learning more about the site and peer reviewing the cost estimate. The peer review is when another engineer reviews the estimates prepared by Weston and Sampson.
- Thus the committee is requesting support from the Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, and Town Meeting to advance the next phase of pre-development studies. I have attached the scope of work which includes wetland delineation, property survey, geotechnical investigation, site layout, permit review, and a pre-design independent cost estimate.
- The cost for this task is \$44,700 and could be done as an amendment to the existing contract.
- The good news is that Highway Department has already received pre-approval to use Chapter 90 funds for this scope of work.
- That being said, the Committee is hesitant to proceed without some public feedback and buy-in for the project. Thus my recommendation is to place an article on the May Town Meeting Warrant to request permission from Town Meeting to earmark the funds for the scope of work from Chapter 90 receipts. As most of you know Chapter 90 expenditures are under the authority of the Selectmen, not Town Meeting, but I feel this is the most appropriate way to get buy-in from the taxpayers before making a further investment into design.
- If this scope of pre-development work is authorized at May Town Meeting, the adjusted timeline would have the DPW facility up for consideration with a solid (hopefully reduced) budget estimate for the Fall 2016 Special Town Meeting and late 2017 construction.

Discussion on the proposed facility ensued.

- The new facility would consolidate most DPW functions in the same general location. The current facility at 500 Avenue A would be used to store out-of-season vehicles.
- Mr. Naughton would like to know the full size of all current facilities being used for the DPW. Mr. Naughton needs to be convinced that this is a needs study rather than a best case facility.
- Mr. Bergeron noted several areas where the current facility does not meet current standards or needs. These include gender-specific bathrooms and shower facilities, a wash bay for vehicles, covered and enclosed storage to enhance the lifetime of vehicles, adequate size for storage of new, larger vehicles, proper storage of certain items, and a foyer area. Mr. Bergeron also noted that the current facility has illegal wiring, an illegal furnace, and does not meet OSHA requirements. Mr. Trombley added that Governor Patrick approved

legislations that would require municipalities, previously exempt from OSHA requirements, to come under OSHA oversight.

- Mr. Nelson asked if certain things need to be in a building rather than just under cover. The proposed facility has some canopy storage for pickup trucks, which don't need inside storage. The inside vehicle storage area will be heated to 50 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter. One issue is that it is difficult to start diesel trucks that have been left outside in the winter. Mr. Naughton asked about engine heaters, but these don't keep the fuel lines warm so you can still get diesel "jelly" in the lines. Naughton asked if there was a cost analysis of keeping trucks inside versus having problems in cold months. It is easier to keep a truck in a bay at 50 degrees and keep it washed than to repair or replace it. Wash bays will allow vehicles to be washed more often and extend their lives to 15-18 years rather than the current 10-15 years. The last large truck cost \$185,000.
- Mr. Bowman noted that we're not building for today, but for the next the 50 years.
- Mr. Ramsey stated that the Committee feels the current recommendation is the minimum need.
- Mr. Menegoni suggested looking at current facilities and retro-fitting and re-using them, and noted that some elements may not need to be at the new facility. Mr. Bergeron responded that any off-season equipment would be stored at 500 Avenue A to reduce the size needed for the new facility.
- Mr. Hanold suggested that listing new requirements due to code, increased population, size of new equipment would be useful for Town Meeting members to hear. The rationale for storage of equipment under cover, and the importance of protecting the equipment might help Town Meeting members understand why the facility got bigger. It would also be helpful to know why the smaller facility of revision 2 was not selected.
- Mr. Hanold suggested highlighting areas where the new facility will save time or money, like not having to wait for trucks to warm up, or result in improvements and efficiencies.
- Mr. Menegoni supports the importance of maintenance and caring for expensive equipment, but is not sold on all of the building/storage areas. Mr. Ramsey replied that the Committee looked at reducing facility storage, but office and employee space are the most expensive, and cutting garage space doesn't save much in costs. Mr. Menegoni is still concerned about the costs of heating the garage area. Mr. Bergeron noted that, unlike the current facility, the new facility will not only be properly insulated, but will have doors to keep the heat in.
- Mr. Naughton suggested that if the Committee could come up with savings in future maintenance, operating and staff costs to offset debt service it would be more convincing to Town Meeting members.
- Mr. Hanold noted that added costs are very visible, while potential savings tend to be small and scattered. Increased comfort is hard to quantify, but utility cost savings is less so.
- The Building committee was thanked for all of the work that's gone into this project.
- Mr. Boutwell arrived at 6:48 PM.
- The selected site is very close to edge of the burn dump. The Town will have to coordinate capping the burn dump with building the new facility. If the proposed solar project goes through, this would involve property where the burn dump currently is. This company will be involved in and will contribute to the cost of capping the burn dump.

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- The water and sewer connections needed for new facility will also be a benefit to the industrial park.
- Not planning to move salt shed, transfer station, gas pumps, or dog kennel. Space on site will be reserved for potential later consolidation. The current dog kennel could be used for other purposes, once renovated, if the dog kennel moves to another location. Some significant work has been done on the building, but it needs a new roof. This building was previously used for equipment storage.
- Mr. Naughton asked if Judd Wire did any soil evaluation for their addition that could provide helpful information. Mr. Bergeron will follow up on this suggestion.
- Judd Wire doesn't have any interest in expanding into the area that will be used for the DPW facility.

### Minutes

Selectmen Moved:

To approve the minutes of March 16, 2016.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

### Capital Improvements Committee

The Capital Improvements Committee recommends funding the following requests:

1. \$132,000 to buy back an Airport Industrial Park lot
2. \$43,325 for the last lease payment on a six wheel dump truck
3. \$385,000 for abatement of Strathmore complex. This is down from the original request of \$702,000 as only the interior parts of the buildings will be abated.
4. \$385,000 for sewer lining to be used for main storm drain/siphon project (the \$385,000 was to be for sewer lines, funded from Town Debt. The Storm drain project is a \$1 million project, to be funded from \$900,000 in Town Debt and \$100,000 from Sewer Debt)
5. \$79,000 for the DPW discretionary fund
6. \$100,000 for upgrading primary sludge pumps. It is hoped that by doing most of the work in house the cost could be significantly lower. This is expected to be funded from the WPCF Capital Stabilization Fund.
7. \$200,000 to increase the WPCF Capital Stabilization Fund.

Some items originally requested have been delayed. Other items were not recommended due to the lack of sufficient information, and can be reviewed again for the fall.

Mr. Trombley provided an update on the sludge storage project. There was an original request for \$792,026 to install a sludge storage tank. Nothing will be requested at this town meeting, but the WPCF has just had a small storage tank installed at the plant, which will be leased for \$1,500 per month out of the operating budget. This tank will be used to stabilize the sludge process control. If this is successful, the next step is to increase the plant's septage intake. If they can prove they can continue to move the process forward, a request for additional storage will be forthcoming in the fall. A pump removed from the First St pump station has been reused at the plant as part of the sludge storage project.

**Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements**

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- Mr. Hanold noted that he had sent out his budget recommendations.
- Mr. Hanold asked that any other suggestions for budget reductions be provided to Ms. Olsen in the next few days so they can be presented for the next meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM**

**List of Documents and Exhibits:**

- Minutes of March 16<sup>th</sup>
- Handouts from the Public Works Facility Planning Committee
- Special Article Balances and Activity Report

**Next Meetings:**

- March 30<sup>th</sup> – Reserve Fund Transfer request, Vote all appropriations and funding sources
- April 6<sup>th</sup> – Draft Finance Committee Report, Special Articles
- April 13<sup>th</sup> – Revise Finance Committee Report and Policy Actions
- April 20<sup>th</sup> – last chance for changes to recommendations, approve report